

Should Protestants Be Allowed To Have An Opinion Regarding The New Pope?

It has been suggested that it is a tragedy for Evangelicals to pray and fast regarding the new pope as called for by Rick Warren.

While it might not be an issue worthy of fasting over as it doesn't look like most of the top contenders to the papal throne have themselves missed too many meals and won't exactly be living in a state of self denial given their opulent surroundings should they get the job, offering up a quick prayer on the matter won't hurt.

After all, the individual selected will play a significant role in steering that interpretation of the Christian faith closer towards true Biblical religion or further away into the assorted errors tempting all that call upon the name of the Lord in one fashion or the other.

What is so wrong with a Protestant praying for the selection of at least a level-headed Pope that adheres to the shared commonalities of Christian doctrine and respects the rights of existence and expression of those he disagrees with?

I guess there are those thinking the atrocities committed during the Thirty Years War by both sides were a good thing.

Nothing wins souls to your vision regarding Christ and His message like a good pillaging and the ravishing of a few unwilling maidens.

Some might ask the question why should Protestants, especially those of the lowly Baptist variety, enunciate an opinion as to the selection of a new Pope or elaborate an explanation as to why those of that particular theological perspective find the power and authority that ecclesiastical institution has asserted for itself as extra-Biblical and questionably dangerous.

Catholics have every right to select whomever they desire as their head honcho.

However, because that institution has assumed for itself a role beyond administering its own internal affairs and undertaken efforts to exert an influence on the world beyond its ornately decorated walls, in a free society those not belonging to this religious tradition have just as much right to speak out regarding the direction as to how this powerful world body might influence the way in which individuals are able to live their own lives and practice their own beliefs.

For though the way in which the Roman Catholic Church gets the message across might be more subtle than the way in which some Protestants do so, relying more on ceremony and glitz rather than a blunt in your face letting you know what they feel and believe regarding the issue often in a gruff and tactless manner, the opposition of the leadership to Protestantism is just as ingrained.

For example, Pope Benedict repeatedly emphasized throughout his pontificate that Protestant churches especially were not real churches and at best could only be thought of as errant theological associations.

No big deal, many not practiced in the art of discernment and worldview implication might conclude.

After all, everyone from the Pope down to the raving village atheist thinks the spiritual path they are journeying down is superior to all others.

However, one may need to stop to reflect for a moment what is being said here.

To the Protestant, the ideal that those of this persuasion endeavor to

strive for can be found in Romans 10:13: “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

By this, it is believed that there is no mediator between God and man other than Christ Himself for those that believe Jesus as the only Begotten Son of God died in our place for our sins and rose from the dead so that those placing their faith solely in Him might have eternal life in Heaven.

However, official institutionalized Catholicism pretty much holds that their's is the only game in town determining who it is that will be rewarded with the prize or gift of salvation.

This the organization does in part through its system of sacraments.

So what the Church is really saying when it denies communion to all but those on its own membership roles is not so much that we think it's best if you participate in this solemn event with those that can better attest to the validity of your faith experience or worthiness of character but rather that you aren't even a fellow Christian at all.

If the new pope has called for a new evangelization effort in areas where Protestantism has made inroads, unless the campaign is confined to targeting those that were previously Catholic with those born into Protestantism or who became Protestant from a non-Catholic orientation off limits, on what grounds do Catholics have to get jacked out of shape when Protestants sweep up disgruntled and easily persuaded Catholics?

One would hope that no one in their right mind would find the violent acrimony of the past where individuals on either side of the divide were often deprived of property, opportunity, and even their very lives all in Christ's name a worthy situation to return to.

However, neither are Christians obligated to go out of their way refusing

to admit that profound religious differences still exist that are better off left in place for the sake of the entire world at least until Christ Himself returns to set hearts and minds straight and to sort out the mess we as fallen human beings have made of this world.

by Frederick Meekins